
Mr. *Earl's*
SERMON
Preach'd to the
SOCIETIES
FOR
Reformation of Manners.

June the 26th, 1704.

Mr. Fairs
SERMON
Preach'd to the

SOCIETIES



Reformation of Manners.

June the 20th, 1704.

7

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Preach'd to the
SOCIETIES
FOR
Reformation of Manners,

In the CITIES of
London and Westminster.

June the 26th. 1704.

By JABEZ EARLE.

Publish'd at their Request.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *John Lawrence* at the
Sign of the *Angel* in the *Poultry*,
MDCCIV.

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By J. A. R. L. E.

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L O N D O N,

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Sign of the Angel in the Partry,
MDCCLIV.

TO
Sir Thomas Roberts

OF
Glassenbury in Kent, Bar.

S I R,

HAVING been call'd to
Print the following
Discourse, by those
worthy Persons at
whose Request it was Preach'd ;
I have presum'd to inscribe it
where my Obligations are sin-
gular.

To your Honourable Family I
owe my being in any measure ca-
pable of serving so good a Cause,
Not only as your House was a

The Dedication.

Shelter to the excellent Mr. Brand (whose singular Uprightness, uncommon Zeal, and perhaps unexampled Publick Spiritedness, have made his Memory precious to Multitudes, beside the most unworthy of those whose Education he encouraged) but as you otherwise liberally assisted in that matter, and to compleat my Obligation have ever since given me fresh Instances of your Generous Kindness.

Beside these private Reasons, I think it less improper to direct such a Discourse to you, because I know you to be a hearty Friend to the Cause it attempts to serve, and to distinguish your self from those Magistrates whose Houses are Notorious for the Debaucheries

The Dedication

ries they were sworn to Discourage, and that perhaps with their Connivance and Countenance too. You are none of those from whom Justice against Profane Wretches must be extorted by a violent Importunity through a Multitude of Shifts and Evasions, while the Air of their Countenance marks out the Informer as the Principal Criminal.

The Lord give you Grace to be still more Zealous in so good a Cause, and it will be no Dishonour to you, that you are so indifferent about matters of doubtful Disputation, and that your Zeal for the Church does not burn up your Charity for modest and peaceable Dissenters.

The Dedication:

May you long live a bright
Example of real Goodness, a
Terror to Evil-doers, an Asser-
ter of the Nations just Liberties,
and when you are called to re-
ceive your Reward in a better
World, may you have the Satis-
faction of leaving your Honour
and Estate to Children that shall
tread in the Steps of their wor-
thy Ancestors, and so be the pe-
culiar Care of Providence, and
Darlings of their Country, from
one Generation to another. So
prays,

Sir,

Your most oblig'd Servant,

J. EARLE.

A

A
SERMON

Preach'd to the
SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners.

Luke XV. 7.

*I say unto you, that likewise Joy shall be
in Heaven, over one Sinner that re-
penteth, more than over ninety and
nine just Persons which need no Re-
pentance.*

THE Parable, of which these
Words are the Application,
was occasion'd by the *Phari-
sees* and *Scribes* murmuring at the
B Free-

Freedom our Blessed Lord us'd in
 Conversing with *Publicans* and *Sin-*
ners: Altho' that Conversation was
 every way Regular, and the Design
 of it highly Glorious; yet so full were
 these Men of a fond Opinion, that
 God had rejected all the *Uncircum-*
cised part of the World, that they could
 not endure any thing that offer'd at
 removing the *Partition-wall*. As tho'
 it were not better that *They* should
 lose the Priviledge of Pe-
 aa. 17. 26. culiarity, than *all the other*
Nations of Men, whom he
made of one Blood with themselves,
 continue *Strangers from the*
 Eph. 2. 12. *Covenant of Promise*. An
 Argument of a strange Spi-
 rit, which yet, alas! has surviv'd that
 Generation of Men, and works most
 notoriously at this Day among those
 of the *Romish Church*, who would
 fain pass for the only Christians, and
 leave all other Pretenders to *uncove-*
nanted Mercy. As tho' none could
 be the *Sheep of God's Pasture*, but those
 who bear such a particular *Humane*
Mark,

Mark, tho' they have the Image and Spirit of the *Lamb of God*.

Our *Saviour* replies to these perverse Men in three very apt *Parables*, the Scope of which is to shew, that God being the Proprietor and common Father of all Mankind, has a fuitable Concern for the Welfare of all, and so must take a real Pleasure in the Salvation of even *one* Sinner.

Q. D. If any of you lose but *one* Sheep out of a hundred, you are uneasy till you find it, and then rejoyce with a fresh and more sensible Joy than you have in the *ninety nine* that did not Stray. Now is it not reasonable to suppose, that God has as much Concern for a Man as you for a Sheep, assure your selves their is Joy in Heaven over *one* Sinner that repenteth, &c. Therefore you ought not to censure my Conduct, since its directed at what's so pleasing to God; but instead of Murmuring should glorify Him, congratulate Them, and believe in Me,

This appears to be the plain Scope of the Words, which are equally improveable to several other Purposes; and therefore I have chosen 'em to answer another sort of Cavillers as, unreasonable as that *Generation of Vipers*, with whom our Saviour had here to do: To which End I shall apply 'em, after having first consider'd 'em *absolutely* as a Proposition, which I would first *Explain*, and then *Account* for,

I. For *Explication*, here are Four Things to be consider'd.

§. 1. The *Repenting Sinner*, i. e. a Person turning from the Love and Service of Sin, to a delightful Endeavour after universal Holiness. One that *coming to himself* (as 'tis said of the Prodigal, v. 17. of this Chapter) *considers his Ways*, and takes up a holy Resolution of changing the Course and Tenor of his *Rom. 6. 22. Life*; that being made free from Sin, and becoming a
Ser-

Servant to God, he may have his Fruit unto Holiness, and the end everlasting Life. Determining with himself, that by the Grace of God he will cease from Sin, that 1 Pet. 4. 2, 3. *he no longer will live the rest of his time in the Flesh to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God. And that the time past of his Life shall suffice to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, &c. The true Penitent, in a Word, is one that being brought to see Things in a true Light, and so Convinced of the Error of his former Ways, enters upon a new Course of Life under the Influence of that Conviction. In the Words of the Apostle, His Eyes being opened, He is turned from the Power of Satan unto God,* Act. 26. 18.

§. 2. The *Just Persons* who need no Repentance, must be either, *first Angels*, who may be said in the strictest Sense so to do, as having never sinned, or *secondly*, those Persons, with whom the *first Repentance* is over; who though they have occasion dai-

ly to lament their Defects and Fol-
lies, yet need no Repentance in the
Sense before-mentioned, as it im-
ports a general Change of Heart and
Life. There's no Necessity of deter-
mining, to which of these the Words
are most applicable, nor Inconveni-
ence in supposing our Lord might
have an Eye to both, seeing
Eph. 3. 15. his *Family or Flock* consists
of both, and the straying
Sheep, when reduc'd, is brought to
the *Heavenly Jerusalem*,
Heb. 12. 22. and an innumerable Compa-
ny of *Angels*: They in,
Heaven, and they on Earth being *one in*
Christ. As for the Exposition of these
worthy *Interpretors* who
Eph. 1. 10. would suppose by *Just Per-*
sons needing no Repentance, our Lord
meant such as the *Pharisees*, who were
so only in their own Conceits; I am
not inclin'd to prefer it, because confi-
dering how *They* are threatned with
Greater Damnation then others; it
would not be so lively and strong a
Representation of God's being well-
pleas'd with the Conversion of a Sin-
ner,

ner, to tell us that He took more Delight in one such, than in many *Detestable Hypocrites*, under which Character our Lord frequently represents that Generation of Men.

§. 3. The Joy that is said to be in Heaven over a repenting Sinner, as it refers to *God*, must be understood of its being a thing *agreeable*, and well-pleasing to him; God being subject to no Passion, Joy when ascribed to him, signifies the *Dispassionate Acquiescence of his Will in what he approves*. But as it refers to *Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect*, it may be taken in a more strict Sense (though making allowance for a vast difference between *their* Passions and *ours*.) They rejoyce over a returning Prodigal, and the Repentance of a Sinner excites fresh Sensations of Pleasure, and gives new Matter for Songs of Praise. A late worthy Expositor indeed, seems shy of granting this, * That the Angels and blessed Spirits are here concern'd,

* Dr. Whitby
in loc.

because the Papists would abuse such a Concession to support the Practice of Worshipping those glorious Creatures, and so eludes, that in v. 10. with an Interpretation that seems too frigid, but I see no reason to depart from the Common Sense of Expositors upon this Head. I doubt not but the Multitude of the Heavenly Host is acquainted with the Conversion of every Sinner. The Angels, who then commence their peculiar Ministration to such Persons, must needs know it, and why such glad Tidings should not be communicated all over the Court of Heaven, as matter of fresh Joy and Praise, I see no Reason: At least if it be granted, I am not at all apprehensive of any Advantage, it may give to the Church of *Rome* in their Controversy with us upon the Head of Idolatry.

§. 4. When there is said to be *more* Joy over *one* Sinner, &c. this is not to be understood in strict Propriety of Speech, as though God were better pleas'd with Repentance than Innocence,

cence, to that Degree especially as to prefer one Penitent to ninety nine Righteous. But the Design of the Words is only to represent how very pleasing the Conversion of a Sinner is to him, which we may conceive of by the familiar Resemblance he uses. And therefore a Learned Commentator clears the Difficulty fully in my Mind, and fairly by telling us, * " That this Passage of ^{* Whitby} _{in sup.} " our Lord, being spoken of " God after the manner of Men, is to " be understood after the manner of " Men, or suitably to the nature of " humane Passions with the usual occasions of moving 'em. Now, says he, " We are much affected with the " obtaining, what we have long and " passionately desir'd, regaining what " we look'd upon as lost, &c. Our " Saviour therefore represents God after the manner of *Men*, to encourage " the Repentance of a Sinner, as if " he did conceive such a Joy at it, as " Earthly Parents are wont to do at " the Return of a wild extravagant " Child to himself and his Duty.

This

This I think may suffice to convey the Sense of the Words which are design'd to shew what Pleasure God takes in the Conversion of a *Sinner*. Now this

II. I am to account for --- in which there is no need to enlarge, I shall only offer a few Things which may sufficiently illustrate the Matter.

§. 1. In the Conversion of a Sinner there is a *Glory* reflecting upon divers of God's *Attributes*. The true Penitent acknowledges the Wisdom and Righteousness of his Government and Laws, while he bewails his own Folly and Baseness in Offending, exalts the Justice and Holiness, Power and Majesty of God, while he confesses his Guilt, deprecates Punishment, *bumbles himself under the mighty Hand of God, and abhors himself in Dust and Ashes*. Glorifies his Goodness and Truth in earnest Cries for Mercy and humble Dependance upon the Promises of Forgiveness; and under the Light of the Gospel adores the Depths of Divine Wisdom and Riches of
Grace

Grace in the Method, Offers and Application of Salvation thro' Christ.

Now God being infinitely concern'd for his own Glory must needs be pleas'd with every thing that illustrates and advances it. It's true God will glorify himself in the Condemnation of the Impenitent ; but so great is his Goodness, that he is peculiarly pleas'd when the Tribute is *freely* paid and not rais'd by *Distress*, and the ruin of his Subjects. He delights not in coming to Extremities, according to that of *Ezek. 18. 32. I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth saith the Lord.*

§. 2. The Conversion of a Sinner answers the *End* of God in all his *Dispensations* towards his Creatures. This he aims at in the Gospel-offers of Salvation by Christs Jesus whom he has *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give Repen-* *Act. 5. 31.*
tance and Remission of Sins.

In the Promises he has made, the Threatnings he has denounced, the
Mer-

Mercies he bestows, the Afflictions he sends, the Ordinances he has instituted, and the Patience he exercises, as would appear upon a particular Enquiry which I must now wave. It is true strictly speaking, that God is not capable of Disappointment ; yet, speaking after the manner of Men, and as he has taught us himself to speak, He is grieved when Men refuse his Love, as tho' they frustrated his Designs ; He bewails their Folly as rejecting *his Counsel.*

Psal. 81. 13, 14. Oh that my People had hearken'd to me, and Israel had walked in my Ways ! I should soon have subdued their Enemies,

Luke 13. 34. &c. And again, How often would I have gathered thy Children, and they would not.

And elsewhere, All the Day long I have stretched out my Hands to a gainsaying People.

Rom. 10. 21. So that we may well represent God as well-pleas'd, when his gracious Ends are attain'd by the Sinners being brought to Repentance.

§. 3. Every Repenting Sinner is a Subject added to the Kingdom of Christ. A fresh Addition to that Church, which is his Body, Eph. 1. 22, 23. the fulness of him that filleth all in all. A Soul delivered from the Power of Darkness, and Translated into the Kingdom of his Dear Son. Every new Convert is a fresh Joy to him, who made his Soul Isa. 53. 10, 11: an offering for Sin, with this Prospect that he should see his Seed, See of the Travel of his Soul to his Satisfaction. Now God must needs be infinitely pleas'd with what is matter of so much Joy to his Son, A Son who always did Joh. 8. 29. those things that please him; Yea who was equal with Phil. 2. 6. God, and could say with Rigorous Truth, I and my Joh. 10. 30. Father are one.

§. 4. Every Repenting Sinner is a Creature sav'd, A condemn'd Offendor pardon'd, a filthy Leper cleans'd, a diseas'd Soul heal'd; yea a dead One made

made alive. Now God has such a Love to his Creatures, that he does *not afflict willingly*, *Judgment* is his *strange Work*, and utter Destruction is what he is merely forc'd upon by a necessary regard to his own Honour and Glory : From all which we may fairly infer his being well-pleas'd with that Repentance which prevents the fatal Necessity. Circumstances may oblige a Father to correct, disinherit ; yea condemn, and perhaps execute his own Son : But oh ! how much better pleas'd is he, when the Case will bear his expressing the Love and Bowels of a Father. So here God is oblig'd to destroy unbelieving, impenitent Sinners, tho' the Work of his own Hands, but it is infinitely pleasing to him, when he can be *just*, and yet a *justifier*, when Impenitency does not oblige him to proceed with Rigour and Severity.

But thus much may suffice at once to prove and account for the Assertion that there is Joy in Heaven, &c.

The

The *Application* of these Words might be to many excellent Purposes. To *magnify* the Office of the Ministry. To *justify* such as are prudently Zealous, to support and strengthen their Hands in their Work, whatever Opposition they meet with from Men or Devils ; to *encourage* Sinners to Repent, by assuring 'em of Acceptance with *that* God, *who is good and ready to forgive, and* *plenteous in Mercy to all them that call upon him.* Who is so far from seeking their Ruin, that he will be infinitely pleas'd with their Recovery, more ready to receive them, than they can be to return to him. But my Design confines me, and I shall endeavour to improve 'em to the Purpose of those *Societies*, in whose Service I am now chearfully Engag'd. To which end I shall attempt Three Things.

I. To shew the Tendency of your Endeavours to promote the Repentance of Sinners.

II. Di-

II. Direct you to have that in your Eye.

III. Encourage you upon the whole.

I. I would shew the Tendency of your Endeavours to promote the Repentance of Sinners, and this under Two Heads.

1. To shew that they have such a Tendency.

2. What kind of Tendency they have.

§. 1. That they have that Tendency will appear from the following Considerations.

1. They may *prevent* many *Acts* of Sin. By your interposing in a Legal Method, you sometimes *hedge up* Sinners *Way with Thornes*, and make their designed Wickedness Abortive.

So that *their Hands cannot*
Job 5. 12. *perform their Enterprize.*

Now this may contribute to Repentance two ways. Part-

Partly as it may prevent *contracting* of a *Habit*, from whence they would with greater Difficulty be reclaim'd. You may perhaps meet with those, that are but Novices in Wickedness. Some *young Man void of Understanding*, whom the Harlot is making her first Attempt to ensnare; and your seasonable Interposure may prevent his being entangled, and so deliver him from the *Pro. 2.16,19. strange Woman, whose House inclines to Death; so that none that go unto her return again*: The meaning of which is, that it's a Thing extremely Difficult, and very rare to recover a Person, that has been once intangled, so as to make him *take hold of the Path of Life*: And so in other Cases. There is a sort of Modesty and Shyness in young Beginners, which a little Custom vanquishes, and it is a vast Happiness for Persons to be by any means disappointed in some of their first Attempts, as it prevents their being harden'd, and set beyond the Reach of common Means, &c.

Partly, as it it may facilitate their *Recovery* from such a Habit when contracted. The more Men sin the more they desire it. Baulking 'em therefore now and then of their Gratification may lessen their Eagerness, and make their Disengagement more feasible. I confess it may possibly have a contrary Effect, irritate the sinful Thirst rather than allay it; but this Objection lies against the very Law of God its self, by which *Sin takes occasion*; yea and the Grace of God too, which many times is *turn'd into Wantonness*.

2. Your methods may make Men *break off Sin* upon *secular Motives*. Fear of being expos'd and ruin'd as to their Temporal Interest may prevail with some beyond much more proper Considerations, and though they may be willing to hazard their *Souls* for the Pleasures of Sin They mayn't think it worth while to ruin their *Bodies*. Now breaking off Gross Sins upon what Motive soever is a good step to Repentance, because it

is

is a breaking one of the Bonds of Satan, in which he held 'em ; For though it's true, with God all things are possible and equally feasible, yet in its self it's easier to work upon a Man that is not under the Power of grosser Wickedness, then one who runs into *all Excess of Riot, and commits all Uncleanness with Greediness* ; and I assert this upon the Authority of our Saviour, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom* Mark 12.34. of God. To say nothing of Experience, which bears Witness, that God's usual Method is to work gradually, reform first and then renew.

3. They have a Tendency to put Persons upon *serious Consideration*. This is Common with all other Afflictions, which arrest the Mind in its vain Sallies, and oblige it to some serious Thoughts. When Men feel the smart, they may be expected to consider, what else they would never have regarded ; especially when they cannot but know for what they suffer. But this is a common Argument, and

therefore I may be excus'd from dilating upon it

4. These Methods do manifestly subserve the *Ends of Magistracy* which is the Ordinance of God, and therefore his Blessing may be expected. That Civil Government is so, is all I need prove, and that I may do very easily, If we consider, that the Magistrate is the Minister of Christ, *by whom Kings Reign, and*
 1 Pet. 2. 14. *Princes decree Justice, and that Rulers are appointed to be a Terror to Evil-doers, and a Praise to them that do well.* Upon which Account the Apostle argues, *Wilt thou not be afraid of the Power.* It is true indeed, that the Magistrate is more immediately appointed for the *Good Order of the World*, to protect Men in their Civil Rights, and prevent the Publick Mischiefs, which would be consequent upon Mens unrestrained Lusts; but this is not the only End. We cannot imagine, that God should have nothing farther

ther in View, and this should be the only Institution, which has no Relation to the good of Men's Souls, when God bears witness to himself by Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, and aims at Sinners Repentance, not only by his Goodness, but by every Providential Rebuke, and Common Affliction. Magistrates are Common Parents, and all their Severities aim at the Reformation, not Destruction of their Subjects. They use the Rod to drive away the Foolishness, that is, bound up in the Heart of the Children. In the Common Form of Indictment, therefore it is Remarkable, that Men are challeng'd; for not having the Fear of God before their Eyes, and upon all Occasion, we see good Princes express a Solitude, that their Subjects be truly Virtuous, as well as keep clear of the Penalties of Humane Laws.

To all which I might add its being an acknowledg'd Maxim, that no

Government can be safe, where Men make no Conscience of an *Oath*, which no Man rightly does, but he that is truly Good, and has a Real Regard to God and Religion. From whence I think it's sufficiently clear, that Magistrates ought to have the Repentance of Sinners in their Eye, and consequently, that such Endeavours as yours have a Tendency by Divine Institution to promote that End. For how can it be suppos'd, that the Magistrate should fully execute his Office, unless assisted by some such proper Methods as those in which you are engag'd.

To all this it may be objected but has this at any time been the Effect of such Methods; has God ever honour'd these Proceedings, as means to bring Sinners to Repentance?

Ans. I am not able *positively* to say, nor is it material to my Purpose. A Means may be in its own Nature adapted to answer an End, and *instituted* by God to that Purpose, and yet

yet not *remarkably Successful* in the actual Accomplishment of it. A Prophet may *stretch out his Hands all the Day long to a rebellious People*. An Apostle may Preach to such as shall only *Contradict* and *Blaspheme*; and provoke him to shake off the Dust of his Feet for a Testimony against them. Church-Censures, are undoubtedly an Ordinance of Christ for excellent Ends; but who can tell me any thing considerable of their Happy Effects.

But let me add. These, your Methods may have been more Successful, than the most observing and inquisitive among you knew (tho' some Instances of that sort have been known to you too) and we must leave Matters of Fact to the Great Day to determine. Duty is ours and Event God. Some other Objections will be remov'd by the Account I have to give under the 2d. Head.

§. 2. Which is to shew, what kind of Tendency these your Endeavours

deavours have to promote the Repentance of Sinners.

1. It is partly *Natural* ; not merely so, nor does the Success depend upon its being so, as will appear afterwards ; but there is a Real Fitness in such Means to answer such an End, abstracting from all other Additional Considerations, as correcting a Child has a natural Aptitude to fetch out the Folly that is in its Heart.

2. It is also an *instituted* Tendency; as Preaching the Word (besides its being naturally suited to persuade Men to turn from Sin to God) has the Advantage of being appointed by God to this End ; so here : This Institution I have already shewn, and therefore shall say no more of it, only that as it is an Instituted Tendency, so all its Success depends intirely upon the Concurrent Influences of the Grace and Spirit of God : Without which, though you *bray a Fool in a Mortar, yet will not his Foolishness depart from him.*

3. A *subordinate* and *inferiour* Tendency. For this is not to be placed in the First Rank and Class of Means, but in Subordination and Subserviency to the Ministry and Ordinances of the Gospel ; to which the Preference must necessarily be given.

4. Lastly, A *limited* and *less Extensive* Tendency. Being confined to more open and gross Offences, while the *Word of God is quick and powerful, a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, whose Influences reach secret Sins and Errors in Judgment. So that these Methods are not to be directed against Notions or Principles how Erroneous soever, unless manifestly dangerous to Civil Society, but only against those Practices, which carry an open Defiance, not barely to the Plainest Precepts of the Gospel, but even the Constant Dictates of the Law and Light of Nature. As all those Offences against which you
are

are engaged, *The Law not being made for Righteous Men, but vile Offenders.*

1 Tim. 1. 9. Not to supply the Place of Argument in Matters concerning which Good Men may differ, but to restrain wicked and unreasonable Men, *who retain the Truth in Unrighteousness.* And at one and the same time trample upon the Authority of God's Vice-gerents in the World, and the Dictates of his Deputy in their own Breast. Men must be punished only for acting Counter to Conscience, not for following even its mistaken Directions, whilst consistent with the Publick Peace.

II. I would direct you to have the Repentance of Sinners in your View; Not that this should be your only End. Nor will I say it ought to be your more immediate Aim. You answer other Excellent Ends, though in this you should fail. It's a Noble Thing to prevent Infections spreading. Though the Patients don't recover in the Infirmary, it's

it's Happy when their Confinement prevents the Plague from spreading its self far and wide. Besides you bear a Publick Testimony to God and Goodness, and your Zeal may avert the Wrath of God from a Nation, as you have heard concerning Phineas, who * Mr. Robin-
 * *executed Judgment, and son's Serm.*
the Plague was stayed.

But I wish you would have this also in your Eye. Upon which Account I humbly offer a few Things by way of Advice.

§. 1. If Circumstances appear to be such, that making of 'em a Publick Example may Exasperate to a Degree of Desperation, or otherwise do more hurt then good; Sometimes it may not be amiss to decline it. I speak this with Submission, and leave you to consider, whether you are so rigorously obliged to be Impartial, as not to make a Difference between Sinners, and use a little Freedom with that abus'd Maxim, *Fiat Justitia & ruat Caelum.* Let
 Justice

Justice be done whate'er comes on't.

§. 2. When it's like to do Good, add *Counsel* to the Rod. To do so, may sometimes be casting Pearls before Swine, but when there's a Prospect of a better Effect ; join Instruction to your Correction, which will Evidence your Good-will to the Criminal, and may make it an Ordinance of Mercy to him.

§. 3. Carry it with *visible Compassion*. Let a Christian Tenderness mingle with an Air of Severe Zeal, lest it appear with too much Bitterness for your Reputation, and the Sinners Benefit. Shew, that what you do is with a Powerful Reluctancy, that you are so much of a God-like Spirit as not to *afflict willingly*, and that you heartily desire, the *Punishment of the Flesh may be for the Salvation of the Soul in the Day of Jesus*. This will be dipping your Weapon in Oyl, and may make it enter beyond Expectation.

§. 4.

§. 4. Add *Prayer* to your other Endeavours. This will be a Satisfaction to your own Minds, that your Ends are not Sinister ; that you mean well, and are under the Guidance of that Wisdom which is from Above, and not acted by a Proud, Imperious, Revengeful, or otherwise Unchristian Spirit. Recommend your Endeavours therefore to the Blessing of that God, who can make them Effectual ; and without whose Hand you can never reach your End. And what if you should never bring an Offender to Justice, without an earnest Ejaculation to God for the Sanctifying his own Ordinance, and remembering him in your Stated Applications to the Throne of Grace the Night ensuing : But such Circumstances I am not to direct you in.

III. Let this encourage you in Well-doing against all Objections ; that you may perhaps *save a Soul from Death,*

Death, and create Joy in Heaven upon that Account. As

§. 1. Does a *Natural Compassion* make you less free to the Work before you. This is a Case that may be supposed; Men of tender Spirits can hardly see Offenders Stigmatiz'd without a Secret Uneasiness, and this may have been a Difficulty in the Way. But remember, it's Kindness to their Souls, and *so spare not for their Crying*. Plucking Men out of the Fire imports Violence indeed, but sure not Unkindness. Remember, Foolish Pity is in many Cases heinous Cruelty: Would they deserve the Name of Friends, that should refuse to give a Man Disturbance in a Lethargy, or keep him from a necessary Scarification, for fear of making him Uneasy? You'll all grant, it would be preposterous destructive Friendship. Why the Case is the same here, only a Life of vastly greater Value is concern'd.

§. 2. Again, Let this encourage you against the *Fatigues, Damages* and *Hazard* your Endeavours may be attended with. To be Faithful in the Work before you will cost you many a weary Step, and careful Thought. You must be at some Expence, and run some Hazard to your *secular Interest*; Yea, your *Lives* may be in Danger; but remember, the Salvation of one Soul would balance the Account. However, if that end should not be answered, your Labour shall not be lost. You shall be rewarded for *designed Service*. It's a support to Faithful Ministers under all their Disappointments, when *they carry much Seed out, and bring but little in*, and may be so to you, that the Reward hereafter shall bear Proportion to the Pains taken, not to the Success. *Though you* isa. 49. 4: *labour in vain, and spend your Strength for nought, and in vain, yet your Judgment is with the Lord, &c.*

§. 3. Do you incur the *Ill-will* of Offenders. This you must expect before-hand, and not be Surprized when you find it. Men will count Us Ministers their *Enemies*, who but tell them the *Truth*, and that with as much Softness, and in as gentle Terms as is consistent with Faithfulness; much more will they count you so, who are obliged to use rougher Methods, and *Teach'em with Thorns and Briars*. A Child will count the Correcting Parent Cruel, the Fretful Patient complains of the Physicians Methods : Much more may you expect to find of this Nature. But be not moved with it, you have God, and Conscience, and Impartial Standers by, applauding your honest and generous Endeavours, not only as Just but Kind ; and there's a Time at Hand, when *They* themselves will be of the same Judgment. If God should make your Endeavours Successful to their Conversion, they'l turn their Bitterest Curses into Grateful Acknowledgments,

ments, and own your
Righteousness smiling to *Psal. 141. 3.*
 have been an *Excellent*

Oyl. And if your Methods fail of
 Success when the harden'd Wretches
 are hurried down to the Prison of
 Hell, to be *Tormented Day and Night*
for ever and ever; They'l find no
 Reason to censure that Conduct as
 Unkind, which would have kept
 'em out of that *Place of Tor-*
ment.

§. 4. Let this Support you un-
 der the *Censures* of others. These
 always have been, and it's like ever
 will be various. Some founded up-
 on Mistake, and it may be more up-
 on Malice. However, let this against
 them all. As now for Instance:

Do they Censure your *Conduct*;
 take care they do it *Falsly*, and then
 despise it. Or if you should make a
 Real Slip, be more Cautious for the
 future, but ben't disheartned. *In*
many things we offend all. And God
 D will

will Approve and Reward the Honest Design, though every Circumstance ben't always Regular. Else wo to all that serve him, especially in a Post of Niceness and Difficulty.

Do they Censure your *Designs* and *Ends*, which they wickedly and profanely Judge, as though they could discern Spirits, and search Hearts: Take care your Aims be Honourable, and that your Carriage give no contrary Indications, and then comfort your selves in Appealing to a higher Tribunal.

Do they Censure your *Persons*, and pretend your Civil or Moral Unfitness for the Work: As to the former, *In publico Discrimine omnis Homo miles*. In a Common Danger, every Man's a Souldier. While you keep your Bounds, serve Authority, and not invade it, while you govern your selves by the Law, and have the Countenance of the
Le-

Legislature in Acts of Parliament, and Royal Proclamations, despise the Calumny. And as to the latter, be sure They have no Reason to say, you are as bad as those you would pretend to Reform. This would indeed be an unsupportable Reflection; but if they say so without Reason, learn to contemn it. Yea ben't mov'd from your Duty, if they can truly say, You *have been* as bad as Others. If it be true, *such were some of You*; yet if it may be added, *but ye are washed*, &c. let this only double your Diligence, that you may give this among other Evidences of your Repentance, that you will do what you can to Reform and Amend others: You have tasted the Bitterness, and felt the fatal Influences of the Poysonous Cup, and may therefore be expected with an uncommon Zeal to snatch it from the Mouths of Others.

Lastly, Do they Censure your *Combination*, and find fault that you

are blended of *several Parties* : Let this Thought support you. Sure it's no Criminal Confederacy when Men join to quench a Fire, or stop a Breach in a Sea-Wall ; to prevent a general Desolation ; yea, were it but to pluck one Brand out of the Burning, or take up one Shipwrack'd Person. Your End is confessedly Good, and the Combination its self has stood the Test of much better Judgments. And as to your consisting of Men that are differently perswaded in the lesser Matters of Religion ; this is to your Honour, and with a very ill Grace made matter of Reflection. When good Men agree to lay aside Private Differences, and concur in promoting the Interest of Virtue, and Kingdom of God among Men. If this be to be Vile, resolve you will be yet more Vile.

But in a Word, let this Consideration among others bear you up under all Discouragements that you are

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are in a Regular way, pursuing a Noble Design, the Accomplishment of which will cause *Joy in Heaven*, However Earth and Hell resent it.

FINIS.

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